



Clerk's Corner



CHRISTOPHER L. JACOBS, Erie County Clerk

Summer 2013

Volume 1, Issue 1

Important Reminders!

- **NY SAFE Act-Opt Out**
Pistol Permit Holders who want assurance that their records are kept private, can still complete the form and submit it to the County Clerk's Office. To learn more and download the form visit www.erie.gov/optout.
- **Questions for Clerk? Your opinion does matter. If you have questions or ideas for the Clerk, please send them to ErieCountyClerkOffice@erie.gov**



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JACOBS UNVEILS "SELF-SERVE" KIOSKS AT AUTO BUREAUS

Clerk says technology will decrease lines and wait times

In a continued effort to utilize technology to improve customer service, Erie County Clerk Chris Jacobs announced the roll-out of Self-Serve Kiosks at the three main auto bureaus. "Similar to what you see at the airport, these kiosks allow you to by-pass the customer service window and print out a wait-time receipt on your own," said Jacobs.



Clerk Jacobs demonstrates how to "Skip the Line" using the new self-serve kiosk at the Downtown Auto Bureau.

Jacobs says the Kiosks are a result of a "re-engineering study" done in the auto bureau in an effort to improve customer service and revenue. "The study found that customers are often waiting longer in the customer service line than they are waiting to be serviced by a cashier...the kiosks will be a powerful tool to decrease the customer service queue," stated Jacobs.

"Although the current system has been a vast improvement over the old days of multiple lines, we believe this technology will take us to a new level of customer service," said Jacobs. "We also hope this will encourage more people to renew their auto registration and licenses at local auto bureaus, keeping more money in Erie County."

The kiosks are installed and operating at the Downtown, Northtown and Cheektowaga Auto Bureaus. In addition to the kiosks, Jacobs said another technology that is soon to be rolled-out will be "hand-held" mobile ticket devices which will allow employees to go out onto the auto bureau floor to service customers when lines start to get too long. "This will be another tool to actively manage our customer service needs," added Jacobs.

"I believe we are the first county in New York to have Self-Serve Kiosks and I think you will quickly see other counties implement this user friendly technology," said Jacobs. For a complete listing of your closest Erie County Auto Bureau please visit www.erie.gov/clerk.

Clerk Jacobs Wants to Keep \$1.5 Million for Erie County

Asks motorists to "Renew Local"

County Clerk Jacobs wants to stop the flow of \$1.5 million that Erie County is needlessly losing to Albany when drivers renew their automobile registrations on-line or mail their renewals to Albany. Every time you renew your registration on line or in the pink envelope, 100% of that registration fee goes directly to Albany and you have to wait and wait to get your registration back. Taxpayers should know that by not mailing renewals directly to the county, we lose out on much needed revenue.

So why not chose to keep your money local and renew your registration in the postage paid green "Renew Local" envelope? In doing so, you will get your registration quicker and bring 12.7% of your transaction into Erie County. It's a win-win for Erie County residents!

"We stepped up our efforts to promote our 'Renew Local' campaign, collaborating with community partners – Travers Collins who donated the design work for our new billboard campaign and Lamar Advertising who donated 20 prominent billboards," said Jacobs.

"I encourage motorists to stop into any Erie County Public Library or Town or Village Hall and pick up your 'Renew Local' envelope today." For more information on the Clerk's "Renew Local" effort or request a green envelope be sent directly to you, please go to renewlocal.erie.gov.



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Jacobs' Office Responsible for 50% of County Surplus

Proud of role Clerk's office plays to support critical services while keeping down taxes

Erie County Clerk Chris Jacobs reported that his office accounted for 50% of the overall county surplus. Jacobs is referring to the County Comptroller's report which shows an overall budget surplus of \$4.27 Million, and "roughly 50% of the county's entire operating surplus," came from the County Clerk said the Erie County Comptroller in his budget close-out report.



Chris Jacobs details the Re-engineering Report that helped generate a 50% surplus his first year in office.

"We were proud to report our over \$2 million dollar surplus several months ago but the fact that we contributed such a large percentage to the County's overall surplus is quite significant," said Jacobs. The Clerk's Office represents only 4% of the County's work force but is responsible for one-half of the 2012 County's surplus.

"The reforms we have implemented in the Clerk's Office are a major reason for this surplus," said Jacobs. When Jacobs came into office he inherited major problems in the Land Records Division with months of unopened mail, un-deposited checks and unreturned legal documents. Jacobs created a "Re-Engineering Working Group" which came up with nearly 30 reforms to improve efficiency and customer service and has implemented a majority of the reforms.

"We will continue to make this office a model of government operations," added County Clerk Jacobs. "Efficiencies that drive revenue ultimately benefit the taxpayer."

Clerk Calls on State to Require New Photo for Driver License

Says to spend millions on new Driver License technology without new photo makes no sense

As the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is preparing to roll out its new driver license, spending nearly \$40 million over another vendor because of enhanced security features, Erie County Clerk Chris Jacobs is calling on the New York State DMV to correct a serious flaw in their regulations; allowing persons to use an outdated photo when renewing. That flaw is the DMV will not require a person to obtain an updated picture when they get their new driver's license.

Several months ago the New York State DMV announced they were awarding a contract to the top bidder, \$38 million more than the next highest bidder, to produce the new state driver licenses for the next 8 years. Upon announcing the award, DMV Commissioner Barbara Fiala said CBN Secure Technologies Inc. was awarded the bid because its security technology was far superior to the other bidders.

"Why should the state be spending all this money on new driver licenses with cutting edge technology when a person can have a photo on their license for almost two decades?...that doesn't seem to be very logical when discussing improved security measures," stated County Clerk Jacobs.

Jacobs said that using dated photos for a driver's license can be dangerous because licenses are used for many other identification purposes beyond driving an automobile, such as boarding an aircraft, purchasing alcohol and for credit and financial transactions. "Just the effort to combat minors using false ID to purchase alcohol and tobacco should be reason enough to demand updated photos every 8 years when someone renews," said Jacobs. Both a U.S. Passport and NEXUS already require a new photograph upon renewal, mentioned Jacobs, "So it makes sense to be consistent across the board."

Erie County Clerk Jacobs conveyed his concerns to the DMV Commissioner in a January letter but has received no response. He has also addressed the issue with all the County Clerks throughout the state at a Clerk's Association meeting in June. Jacobs said he is also reaching out to local members of the State Assembly and Senate about the need to reform this practice. "If we don't require an updated picture, let's not waste taxpayer money on new driver licenses," added Jacobs.

Several years ago the State DMV changed the renewal cycle from 5 years to 8 years. When renewing your license, there is no additional fee charged by the Auto Bureau for a new photo. For additional information on obtaining a Driver License or non-Driver ID visit www.erie.gov/clerk.



Sample of proposed new Driver License

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Jacobs Expands Passport Services While Increasing Revenues *County Clerk's Office will now offer monthly outreach*

As a service to Erie County residents, County Clerk Chris Jacobs announced that his office will be offering additional "Passports on the Move" outreach events the second Tuesday of every month from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Erie County Auto Bureau, located in the Northtown Plaza, 3095 Sheridan Drive in Amherst. "The Clerk's Office is pleased to make this service available in order to meet the growing demand for passports," said County Clerk Jacobs. "I want to make County government more customer-centered, including offering convenient alternatives for our customers to obtain passports."



Clerk Jacobs welcomes this newly naturalized couple and their family to the Clerk's Office and assists them in obtaining their passports.

Applicants will be able to apply for a passport card, passport book or both. For an additional fee, the County Clerk's Office offers an expedited service which reduces the processing time to 3 days. Payment must be in the form of check or money order. No cash or credit cards will be accepted.

Applicants will need to bring with them an original or certified copy of their birth certificate, proof of identity such as a current New York State driver's license or non-driver I.D., and one 2x2 photo. The Clerk's Office can also take a passport photo on-site for a \$10 fee.

"I encourage anyone who is planning their spring or summer vacation or for college students preparing for a semester abroad, to come to our "Passport on the Move" outreach and apply for their passport," added Jacobs. In 2012 the Clerk's Office accepted 726 passport applications, while generating over \$24,000 in revenue for Erie County. The expanded outreach events hope to improve upon those profits.

Reservations are required. To schedule an appointment please contact the Erie County Clerk's Office directly at 716-858-8866. Passport applications, a list of all required documents and a schedule of fees is available by visiting www.erie.gov/passports.

The Erie County Auto Bureau offers the new, easier way to obtain an E-ZPass account!



It's as E-Z as 1-2-3!

Stop at any Erie County Auto Bureau to purchase the pre-packaged account kit for \$25.00

Around Erie County with Clerk Jacobs

The County Clerk hosts numerous Community Outreach Events throughout the County...click on the photo to read the rest of the story!



Clerk Jacobs reminds all motorists to watch for motorcycles this season.



Clerk Jacobs and Congressman Brian Higgins honor veteran Robert Franz with second Purple Heart.



Clerk Jacobs speaks with a constituent who had her tax return filed through the CASH Program.



Christine Oliver (Center) receives her NYS non-Driver ID from Clerk Jacobs after years of not being able to obtain proper ID.



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We're on the Web!

www.erie.gov/clerk

**KEEP YOUR TAX DOLLARS
IN ERIE COUNTY...
RENEW LOCAL!
VISIT RENEWLOCAL.ERIE.GOV**



Erie County Clerk Chris Jacobs along with Edward S. Nowotarski at the Clerk's "Thank-A-Vet" Outreach in the City of Tonawanda, hosted by Mayor Ron Pilozzi.

Mr. Nowotarski is a World War II Veteran who also participated in the Nuremburg Trials, a series of military tribunals held by Allied Forces.

"Thank-A-Vet" Discount Card Program

Rapidly approaching 500 participating businesses

The Clerk's "Thank-A-Vet" Discount Card Program is available to any veteran in Erie County who files their original military discharge papers with the County Clerk's Office. DD-214's are valuable documents that are proof of one's military service and can be used to establish eligibility for a variety of benefits such as property tax exemptions, civil service credits and Military Honors.

Eligible veterans will receive a photo I.D. card which identifies them as an honorably discharged veteran which can be used at participating businesses throughout Erie County who have agreed to honor the card by providing

the holders a discount on purchases or services.

Jacobs has gone out to hundreds of area businesses asking them to offer a discount or benefit to the veteran who presents this card. "We have been overwhelmed with the response from the business community throughout Erie County," said County Clerk Jacobs. "At present we have close to 500 businesses participating and offering a true benefit to our veterans."

As a free service to veterans, the Erie County Clerk puts these valuable documents on file for safe-keeping, providing peace of mind to the veteran and loved ones knowing that

certified copies are easily accessible when needed. "This complimentary program is a way to recognize the over 53,000 veterans throughout Erie County for their service and sacrifice," added Clerk Jacobs.

For more information on the Clerk's "Thank-A-Vet" Discount Card Program, view a list of participating businesses or to enroll your business as a contributing merchant, please visit www.erie.gov/thankavet or call the Clerk's Office directly at (716) 858-6985.

